a microprocessor coupled to the receiver, the received signal strength indicator circuit, the signal quality indicator circuit, and the decoder circuit;

wherein the microprocessor is operable to energize and de-energize the receiver circuit; determine the presence of a carrier with a carrier detect false rate, based, at least in part, on the power in the channel, and to determine an acceptable signal quality with a signal quality false rate, based, at least in part, on an output of the signal quality indicator circuit.

9. (New) The battery-powered radio of Claim 8, wherein the microprocessor is operable to energize the receiver circuit for a first period of time, and, if the carrier is determined to be present, to then maintain the receiver in the energized state until a determination is made as to whether acceptable signal quality has been obtained.

10. (New) The battery-powered radio of Claim 9, wherein the microprocessor is operable to de-energize the receiver circuit if the carrier is determined to not be present, without performing a signal quality determination.

11. (New) The battery-powered radio of Claim 10, further comprising:

a metering unit coupled to the microprocessor;

an encoder circuit coupled to the microprocessor; and

a radio transmitter circuit coupled to the encoder circuit.